



**BSA Medical Sociology
Conference 2024**

Wednesday 11 - Friday 13 September

PLENARY SPEAKERS

BRITISH
SOCIOLOGICAL
ASSOCIATION

WEDNESDAY 11 SEPTEMBER

17:00-18:00

Wood-Scawen Room, Warwick Arts Centre

Nicky Hudson



The chronicity-fertility nexus: Conceptive imaginaries, medical complexity and (dis)integrated care

For the millions of people living with chronic conditions, conception, pregnancy and parenthood may be disrupted by their experiences of ill health. Tentative diagnoses, symptomatic bodies and biomedical protocols create ambivalences and uncertainties around planning for and having children. In contrast, fertile imaginaries tend to coalesce around narratives of hope, futurity and normalcy, with reproducing bodies seen as sites of wellness and productivity. In the context of chronic illness, reproductive expectations and experiences may become fragmented, appraised, revised and re-ordered. Biomedical innovations and reproductive technologies designed to overcome, circumvent or 'fix' ill, infertile, or at-risk bodies add further layers of ambivalence, hope and risk.

In this talk, I explore the contingencies and complexities that characterise reproduction in the context of chronic illness. Using the empirical case of endometriosis, I consider how reproductive expectations and imaginaries are lived through and alongside chronic illness; multiplying uncertainty and disruption in a range of ways. Endometriosis is a particularly salient example due to its suspected, but largely indeterminate, relationship with in/fertility. At times this (assumed) relationship generates new and convergent diagnostic categories- e.g. anticipatory infertility - and at others it disrupts and dislocates both individual expectations and biotechnological regimes.

Using the idea of the chronicity-fertility nexus, I suggest we need to consider the limitations of current treatment pathways, which tend to be organised around single disease entities, and often ignore reproductive intentions and practices. I suggest that we need to pay closer attention in both medical sociology and health care policy and provision to the intersection of illness trajectories, reproductive expectations and modalities of care.

Biography

Nicky Hudson is Professor of Medical Sociology and Director of the Centre for Reproduction Research; an interdisciplinary centre of expertise at De Montfort University focused on the social, cultural and political aspects of human reproduction. Her research explores experiences of reproductive health, the development and use of a range of reproductive technologies, and the social contexts in which they exist. Her current work focuses on egg donation, direct-to-consumer genetic testing and its impact on

donor conception, and the use of pre-conception expanded carrier screening. She has an interest in chronic illness and its management, and in particular how it intersects with reproductive trajectories.

Her research has been funded by the Economic and Social Research Council, the Wellcome Trust, the NIHR and the Foundation for Sociology of Health and Illness and is influential in the development of policy and regulation in the management of fertility treatment in the UK and Europe. She is a current member of the NICE Guideline Development Committee on Fertility and is a member of the British Fertility Society's Law Policy and Ethics Special Interest Group. She has been invited to give evidence to policy and professional bodies including the Human Fertilisation and Embryology Authority, Royal College of Nursing, the Nuffield Council on Bioethics, and the International Infertility Counselling Organisation. She is currently co-editor of the book series: *Emerald Series in Reproduction, Culture and Society* and from October 2024 will co-edit the journal, *Sociology of Health and Illness*.

FRIDAY 13 SEPTEMBER

09:30-10:30

Wood-Scawen Room, Warwick Arts Centre

LaTonya J Trotter



Beyond health disparities: The medical workplace as a site of racialization, expropriation, & resistance

In this talk, I intend to disrupt conventional narratives that depict medical care, its professions, and its institutions as minor characters in the perpetuation of health disparities. Drawing from historical and contemporary cases, I will discuss how medicine not only reflects but actively engages in processes of racial formation and expropriation. Through this discussion, I will illustrate how medical practices, policies, and institutions have historically and in the present moment been complicit in producing vulnerability to extract value from marginalized communities—value that is then used to bolster the professional and economic aims of medical actors.

However, I endeavor to share a narrative that disrupts as well as describes. Medicine as a social institution is complicit in producing vulnerability, but it is also a potential site of resistance. I will discuss how healthcare workers, particularly during the COVID-19 pandemic, have engaged in acts of resistance that reveal the potential for healthcare providers to work in tandem with patients to envision and enact a more equitable future.

Biography

LaTonya J. Trotter is an Associate Professor of Bioethics and Humanities within the University of Washington's School of Medicine and an affiliate investigator at the University of Washington's Center for Health Workforce Studies. As a sociologist and bioethicist, she takes an institutional view of ethics by considering how social and workplace institutions shape notions of responsibility and what constitutes "good" or ethical decisions by both health care professionals and lay providers of care. In considering how decisions around care get made, her work connects changes in the organization of medical work to the reproduction of racial, economic, and gender inequality. She takes up these and other questions in her book, *More Than Medicine: Nurse Practitioners and the Problems They Solve for Patients, Health Care Organizations, and the State* (Cornell University Press 2020), which was awarded the 2021 British Sociological Association's, Foundation for the Sociology of Health and Illness Book Prize.

Dr. Trotter's publications have received awards sponsored by the American Public Health Association, the British Sociological Association, the Society for the Study of Social Problems, and the American Sociological Association. She is on the editorial boards of the journals *Gender & Society* and *Contemporary Sociology*, is an Associate Editor for the *Journal of Organizational Sociology*, and serves as a board member for the Johns Hopkins University Press's Health Communication Series.